COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND RESOURCES

OPENING STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN DARRELL ISSA

Oversight Hearing:

"Rebalancing the Carbon Cycle"

September 27, 2006

The Administration's release of the U.S. Climate Change Technology Program's strategic plan on September 21, 2006 and the Government Reform Committee hearing on technology research titled "Do We Need a 'Manhattan Project" for the Environment?" are just two very recent examples of how climate change is being addressed by the federal government and Congress. Notwithstanding thousands of studies and politicization of the issue on both sides of the aisle, the central problem is a simple one. Humans emit more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than can be processed by natural systems. The question that we must answer, then, is how best to address this imbalance in the flow of carbon between the earth, atmosphere, and oceans.

From my point of view, this is an engineering problem with two basic solutions. We can (1) emit less carbon dioxide by burning less fossil fuels, and (2) capture and store carbon dioxide produced by burning fossil fuels. I have come to strongly believe that nuclear power is a major part of the solution to the unbalanced carbon cycle, and this is why I held a hearing last week about the progress of the Department of Energy's Next Generation Nuclear Plant. Current plans to construct new nuclear plants are not enough. It is important that the Next Gen nuclear plant is completed because of its tremendous potential for zero-emission electricity and the production of hydrogen for the

transportation and industrial sectors. Together, electricity and transportation account for about 69 percent of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions.

This hearing will explore federal funding, scientific research, and technology development related to the carbon cycle and discuss what we do and do not know about the carbon cycle and the strengths and weaknesses of different technologies to reduce carbon emissions.

Today in our first panel the Government Accountability Office will detail federal funding for climate change science, technology, and emission reduction programs. Officials from the U.S. Climate Change Science Program and U.S. Climate Change Technology Program will discuss federal science and technology programs related to the carbon cycle.

Our second panel includes carbon cycle experts from Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Harvard University, and the Natural Resources Defense Council who will discuss what we do and do not know about the carbon cycle, the potential significance of changes in the carbon cycle, and the strengths and weaknesses of different technologies to reduce carbon emissions.

Today we welcome:

Panel 1

- **Mr. John B. Stephenson**
  Director, Natural Resources and Environment, Government Accountability Office
- **Dr. Roger C. Dahlman**
  Co-Chair, Interagency Carbon Cycle Working Group, Climate Change Science Program
- **Mr. Stephen D. Eule**
  Director, U.S. Climate Change Technology Program

Panel 2

- **Dr. Gregg Marland**
  Ecosystems Science Group, Environmental Sciences Division, Oak Ridge National Laboratory
- **Dr. Steven C. Wofsy**
  Abbott Lawrence Rotch Professor of Atmospheric and Environmental Chemistry, Harvard University
- **Dr. Daniel A. Lashof**
  Science Director, Climate Center, Natural Resources Defense Council